



Division Guideline #5

Date: **Created April 22, 2011**
 Revised January 27, 2012
 Reviewed January 29, 2013

Title: **Water temperature regulation for residential programs**

Application: **Clarification to be used by Regional Offices for technical assistance with support coordinators, providers, families and individuals**

The comfort and preferences of the individual are balanced with the abilities and safety of the individual. This is outlined in the individual's plan.

1. The ability and safety risk of each individual receiving residential services related to management of water temperatures should be documented in the individual's plan. The considerations to screen and document for safe management of water temperatures would include, but not be limited to:
 - a. Physical ability to manipulate faucets/ handles to control the mixture of hot and cold water from the source;
 - b. Physical ability to remove one's self from water temperature source or to communicate the need to be removed;
 - c. Cognitive ability to recognize changes in water temperatures, know what to do to change the water temperature as it comes out of the faucet, and/or communicate the need for help;
 - d. Physical or health issues that result in changes in sensation or ability to feel sensations, such as diabetic or other neuropathy, peripheral vascular disease, conditions that may cause thickening of the skin, etc.; and

- e. Use of medications that may change the ability to feel sensations in or that may make skin more sensitive to changes in temperature or burning.
- 2. The necessary strategies, equipment and/or supervision to assure safety for water temperature regulation are to be outlined in the individual's personal plan.
- 3. Each agency supporting individuals in residential services should have a policy, procedure, or guideline related to management of water temperatures, including periodic measurement and documentation of temperature measurements.
- 4. In situations in which individuals do not have the abilities to regulate water temperatures or have a physical or health condition that makes self-regulation unsafe, water temperatures are not to exceed 120 degrees Fahrenheit at the point of use.
- 5. Every reported incident resulting in burns from hot water temperatures will result in an inquiry from the regional office.
- 6. Annually, the Quality Enhancement Leadership Team will include data in the annual report related to burns.
- 7. Information related to safe use and regulation of water temperatures will remain posted on the Division of Developmental Disabilities' website, updated at least annually, for reference.

This guideline will be reviewed and updated annually, if needed.